

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5112

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 7, 2001

Title: An act relating to child passenger restraint systems.

Brief Description: Applying child restraint system laws to children up to eight years of age or eighty pounds.

Sponsors: Senators Costa, Swecker, Fairley, Oke, Gardner, Haugen, Eide, Kohl-Welles and Patterson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/31/01, 2/7/01 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5112 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Benton, Jacobsen, Johnson, Kastama, McAuliffe, Oke, Patterson, Prentice, Shin and Swecker.

Staff: Jennifer Strus (786-7484)

Background: During the 2000 legislative session, ESHB 2675 passed which, among other things, required that children between four years of age or over 40 pounds and six years of age or 60 pounds be required to use a booster seat. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has recommended that children up to age eight or 80 pounds be required to use booster seats.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Children who are between the ages of four and eight or between 40 and 80 pounds must ride in a child booster seat. Any person who inspects, adjusts or provides educational services regarding a child passenger restraint system is not liable for civil damages unless their actions constitute gross negligence.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Portions of the existing statute are moved for clarification. The amendments are not substantive.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2001.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Automobile accidents are the leading cause of death for children. Children less than eight years old or 80 pounds are not sufficiently physically developed for seat belts

to protect them without the use of booster seats. Children can also suffer abdominal injuries from the use of a seat belt without the use of a booster seat when involved in an accident.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: John Moffat, Washington Traffic Safety Commission; Dr. Beth Ebel, Pediatrician, Harborview; Katharine Kruger, Washington Safety Restraint Coalition; Deputy John Cummings, Snohomish County Sheriff's Office; Tamara Cline, Kent Police Department.